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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Venezuela

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SUBJECT Agricultural Extension Services and Recommendations
for Revision

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1. Extension work is carried on in five divisions of the Ministry of Agriculture, namely; coffee, cocoa, vocational agricultural [home economics and 5-V clubs], Instituto Nacional de Agricultura [INA], and the Extension Agrícola. There is little coordination of work or administration and in many instances, two or more of the services are set up in separate offices in a town.
2. Coffee extension work began in 1939. Some excellent work is being done in promotion of coffee growing without benefit of a research program. The coffee division must rely on its practical experience on coffee farms operated by Ministerio de Agricultura y Cría [MAC] and those of coffee farmers. Sr Jaime Henao Jaramillo, coffee division chief, has good records showing the improvement in quantity and quality produced over the last 12 years.
3. Men are trained in a practical school at Rubio and many are retained by the coffee division to directly assist growers. But the work is more of a direct service than an educational program of demonstration. Since coffee is produced mostly by owner-operators, more of an educational program should be developed.
4. Extension offices are maintained in San Cristóbal, Mérida, Bocono, Guarico, and Caripe. In all but San Cristóbal, duplicate offices are maintained for general extension work.
5. Cocoa extension work began in 1939. Dr Juan M Christoffel, chief, and Sr Alberto Hernández of the MAC cocoa farm in Ocumare, are leaders in the work of improving varieties and production. Some help is provided by research workers of INA at Maracay in fermentation and disease control problems. There is no research carried on directly by INA, nor does INA have any administrative responsibility for practical research at Ocumare.
6. Extension work in sugar cane is based on research done at the sugar experiment station at Maritagua and by INA. The research workers are taking their findings to the farms

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and observing the actual problems occurring. Many farmers are bringing their problems to the station. Bulletins are published on results of the research work and are available to the farmers.

7. In the office at Yaritagua is a plot record map of every farm, including rotation plan and dates visited by the worker.
8. The new rice experiment station at Araure, located in a rice-growing area, is serving those farmers with information on variety tests and some fertilization tests. There is also some work with sesame varieties and fertilization tests going on. Both the district supervisor and his assistant own farms and seem to have the confidence of farmers. There are plans to place some demonstration plots on farms and to publish their findings for the benefit of the farmers.
9. Home demonstration type of extension is within the Agricultura Vocacional. This department also handles 5-V clubs and agricultural education in rural schools. There are 80 home demonstration agents working out of 53 centers. There are five zone supervisors and four specialists in the fields of carpentry, canning, sewing, and ceramics.
10. Home agents are trained in special schools at Maracay and San Cristóbal. The three-year course includes all phases of homemaking with practical work in raising vegetables, bee culture, poultry, and rabbit raising. Home agents have no transportation, consequently the work is generally done in the office. There are some wives' clubs.
11. Home improvement is one of the major activities and is divided into two phases. If a family desires to build a new home, the ministry will furnish half the materials, and blueprints of a standard type of desirable home. The more important phase is the building of simple furniture, adding cement floors, metal roofs, constructing windows, and building partitions. The ministry furnishes some materials for families recommended by the home agent. While these activities are desirable, the home agent is often doing too much of the actual work.
12. Extensión Agrícola was created in 1938. There is a chief and his assistant at the ministry in Caracas and district offices at Cagua, Barquisimeto, Acarigua, San Cristóbal, and Cumardá. All five district offices have a supervisor and an assistant who are graduates of the college of agriculture. There are 50 agents in 31 stations staffed mainly with graduates of the practical school of agriculture.
13. Many of these agents are busy with a direct service program to farmers of loaning machinery, tractors, spraying and dusting equipment, and selling seeds, insecticides, and fungicides. Others who are trying to help farmers determine the best type of farming and demonstrate the best practices are doing so without adequate bulletins in non-technical language, teaching aids, and support from research specialists. In some cases they do not have proper transportation. Agents must visit district offices monthly to collect their pay and fill out a lengthy report which deals with the business side of their work as well as project work.
14. Conservation work is under the Dirección Forestal and provides for a) information and education; b) demonstration areas; c) farm plans; d) cooperative conservation; e) pasture building program. A separate group of agents, called technicians, are working in some areas with farmers on the subjects mentioned.
15. The organization of extension work does not anticipate the function of being educational. Too much time is taken up in direct aid, which also creates in the farmer an attitude of dependence, and destroys his conception of the agent as a source of educational assistance. Distribution of the farmer's needs must be put into private hands and operation of heavy machinery handled by farmers associations. [The name "cooperatives" had to be carefully avoided].
16. Agents interviewed expressed the need for supervisory assistance in planning programs. Many need better office facilities. Home agents need transportation. All agents are at a lower salary rate than other government employees with comparable training and experience.

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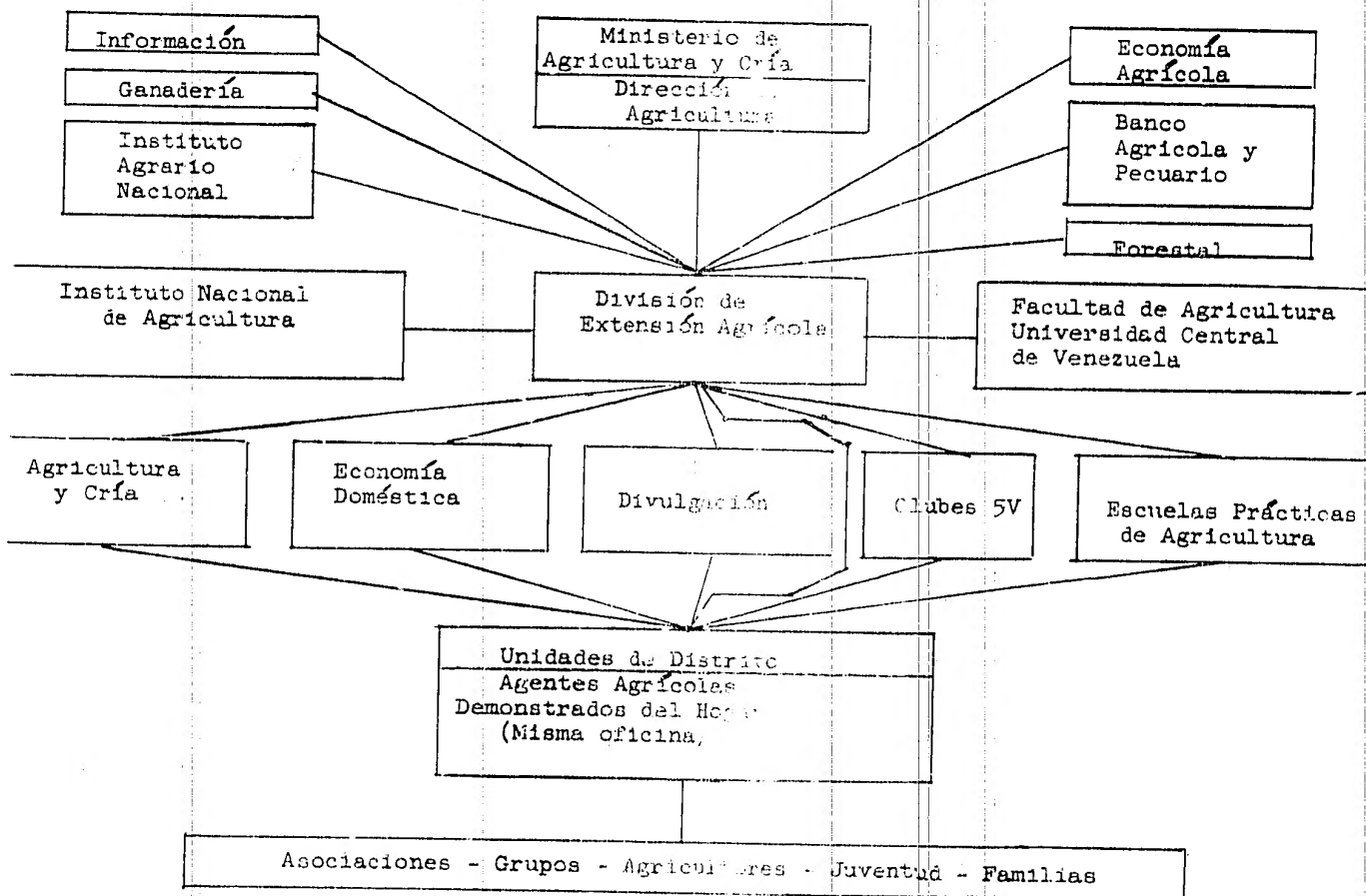
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17. The following needs are recognized in the proposal for reorganization of extension services:

- a) The desire to produce Venezuela's food requirements.
- b) Provision for better relationship with other divisions of the ministry that have a contribution to make to better farming and homemaking.
- c) Coordination between research and extension.
- d) Coordination between extension, the college of agriculture, and the practical schools for training potential staff members.
- e) Introduction of new methods of doing extension work, including mass methods of use of press, radio, television, etc.
- f) Better supervision of the field staff.
- g) Better coordination of services now offered to farmers.
- h) A clear definition of functions and delegation of responsibilities.

18. Following is a chart of the proposed organization which involves the following changes:

- a) All educational work to be done through the extension division.
- b) Taking the results of research to the people through one outlet.
- c) Use of the college of agriculture for training extension workers.
- d) The practical schools of agriculture, home economics, coffee, and cocoa to become a sub-division of the extension division.
- e) Home economics and 5-V clubs to become sub-divisions of the extension division.
- f) Creation of a new sub-division of extension called "Divulgación" to serve all extension workers with editorial and educational aid assistance.
- g) Creation of a sub-division of Agricultura y Cría to provide specialists' services to the field.
- h) All field services of an educational nature now operating out of separate offices at the local level to be combined into one office on the same basis.



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